

EMERGENCY

MEASURES

NEWS

The Newsletter of Emergency Measures Ontario

Volume 2, No. 1 Fall 1995

Summer of '95 — Season of Emergencies

BY KATHY KERR

From raging forest fires and severe storms to a toxic spill that brought the 401 to a grinding halt, the summer of '95 was one of the busiest in recent years for emergency responders.

Nine communities officially declared emergencies while numerous others experienced near-emergency conditions. Countless emergency response personnel and operational support staff from the local, provincial and even international level were involved in dealing with the emergencies.

The writing was on the wall begin-

ning in June. On June 7, the Township of Uxbridge reported minor damage from a tornado that touched down in their community. On June 13, the busiest highway in North America, the 401, was closed in both directions at Weston Rd. due to a spill of toluene. That very same week, 1,900 residents from the First Nation communities of Bearskin Lake, Wunnumin Lake, Kasabonika, Kee-Way-Win, Koocheching, Deer Lake, Sachigo Lake and Muskrat Dam were evacuated to Thunder Bay, Geraldton and Red Lake due to threatening forest fires.

In July, hot and humid conditions

brought about many spectacular demonstrations of lightning, wind and rain. On July 13 and 14, severe wind storms ripped through southwestern and central Ontario. The townships of Goderich, Smith, Lake of Bays, Galway and Cavendish, Muskoka Lakes and Dysart et al declared emergencies. (An in-depth look at Goderich's recovery response appears on page 4.) The Insurance Bureau of Canada reports that over \$20 million in claims were made as the result of the substantial damage caused by the storms.

In August, it was back to severe fire conditions in the North. More than 900 residents from Dubreuilville were evacuated when forest fires seriously threatened their community and an emergency was declared. (For a start-to-finish account of the Dubreuilville emergency, see page 5.)

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Beds await exhausted evacuees in Geraldton's reception centre during June's forest fire emergencies.

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From the Director's Desk

BY JIM ELLARD

Training is the foundation of any successful emergency preparedness and response program. A well trained nucleus of people representing first responders, local industries and volunteers are essential to the development of sound emergency plans and response arrangements.

The EMO training program survives, and we hope it will continue to do so!

Our emergency planning and

response (EPR) course, which provides the basics of preparing and using an emergency plan, has been conducted this year in Perth, Dryden, Sudbury, Guelph, Kenora and Owen Sound. By the end of March '96, courses will have also been delivered in Tillsonburg, Moosonee, Toronto, Newmarket and Rama.

While the EPR course continues to be "in demand," the exercise design course has not enjoyed the same response. Five courses have been completed this year, but have drawn an average of only 15 students per course. Undoubtedly, more communities could benefit from the course — particularly as they develop exercises to test new or revised emergency plans.

The exercise design course provides valuable hands-on instruction. Participants prepare and conduct paper and tabletop exercises along with a telecommunications exercise. Any insights on making this course

more accessible and increasing enrolment are welcome.

A new emergency public information course was launched in St. Thomas in October, to be followed by a second run in Oakville in December. This course is designed to give community spokespersons a chance to practise their roles in front of a TV camera, using both real topics and simulated emergency situations.

Other improvements being planned for the future include the introduction of emergency management training, the reintroduction of community workshops and an adventurous step down the path of computer-based training systems.

Next year will be a challenge, in light of possible changes to funding and staffing levels, but Emergency Measures Ontario intends to continue to place a high priority on the delivery of emergency training.

(continued from page 1)

It was also in August that a mysterious flaming meteor was spotted streaking across the skies of southern Ontario, causing what turned out to be unfounded concerns about radiation from meteor fragments thought to have fallen to earth.

While Mother Nature seems to have dealt us a rather harsh hand this summer, good planning, timely and efficient responses and excellent cooperation amongst communities and emergency personnel resulted in no lives being lost.

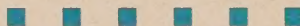
(Kathy Kerr is EMO's operations officer.)

Emergency Measures Ontario is part of the public safety division of the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services. *Emergency Measures News* is published twice yearly and distributed to municipalities and First Nations in Ontario, and to those who work to promote emergency preparedness.

Your ideas and comments are welcome. Please send them to:

Editor, Emergency Measures News
Emergency Measures Ontario
25 Grosvenor Street, 19th floor
Toronto, Ontario
M5B 1L2
Tel: (416) 314-8623
Fax: (416) 314-3758

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EMO on the Move

BY MALCOLM SCOTT

After three years of negotiations, discussions, postulating and planning, Emergency Measures Ontario (EMO) has relocated to new offices which comprise the entire 19th floor of the George Drew building in downtown Toronto.

Co-located with the administrative and day-to-day offices of EMO is the new provincial operations centre (POC). The POC was previously housed at the general headquarters of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), but was included in the new EMO facilities when the OPP headquarters moved to Orillia last August.

The new POC is not only larger, it has been technologically upgraded to better deal with today's emergency situations and those that will present themselves in greater numbers as the new century approaches.

The cramped and dislocated rooms of the old POC faded into distant memory as some POC participants and municipal officials toured the new facilities recently. Within the POC is designated space for: the operations (OPS) group, technical (tech) group, executive group, information group and primary agency. The OpsGroup room seats 31 in a parliamentary U-shaped design, supported by microphones,

telephones, lamps and high-speed computers at each desk. OpsGroup information is displayed on whiteboards, panaboards, television and computer image projection, overhead projection and a bank of television monitors.

The new POC will utilize an emergency management software called SOFTRISK, which supports task management, communications, resource management and mapping, as well as other functions using

a media briefing centre for major emergency situations,

- ☒ a video conferencing facility, and
- ☒ a 'visit' studio which can be used for remote computer based teaching.

EMO's move took place over the weekend of July 22-24, 1995. The situation room was active and available at all times during the move. The provincial operations centre was, for a time, operational at either location. However, the new

POC officially came on-line August 5, 1995.

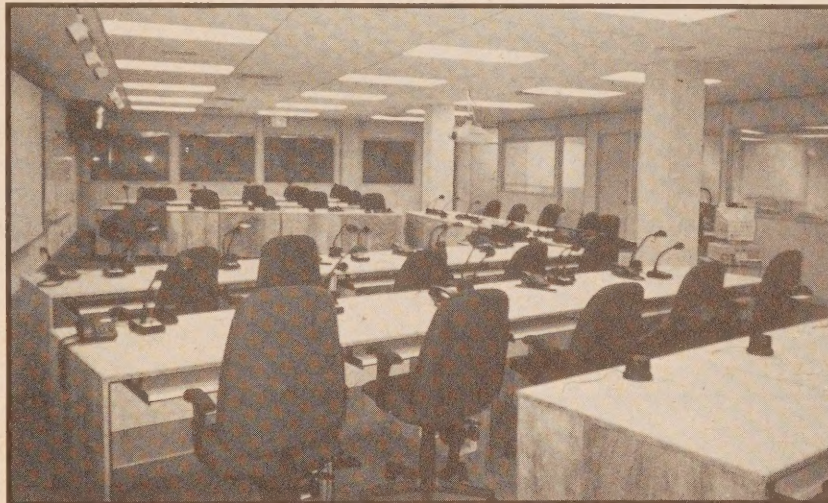
The relocation is a tremendous boost to the capabilities of EMO. Our ability to function in an emergency and on a day-to-day basis has been improved several fold. The fact that EMO can respond from its office location creates the advantage of having all regular EMO office

resources, as well as those of the POC, available at all times.

Visitors are welcome to visit our new offices at any time during normal business hours. EMO is also planning an open house event sometime before the year end.

For more information on EMO or the new POC, call (416) 314-3723.

(Malcolm Scott is EMO's nuclear emergency measures adviser and was responsible for organizing EMO's recent move and the new POC.)



The Provincial Operations Centre is now located at EMO's new offices at 25 Grosvenor St. in downtown Toronto.

Microsoft Windows.

The techgroup room is outfitted in a similar fashion to the OpsGroup and can accommodate 18 scientific and technical personnel along with their support staff. EMO's technical library is attached to the techgroup room.

EMO's offices contain several other special use facilities:

- ☒ a briefing centre which can be used as a classroom, as an exercise control cell room or as

Goderich — The Road to Recovery...

BY STEVE BEATTY

Severe storms that wreaked havoc across southern Ontario this summer left massive damage and destruction. The Town of Goderich — located on the western shore of Lake Huron — took one of the heaviest hits late in the afternoon of July 13.

Miraculously, no one was injured by the storm and very few homes suffered severe damage. However, known for its beautiful century-old trees, Goderich was very clearly not the same. The trees took the brunt of the storm, seemingly plucked from the earth and thrown onto roads, consequently destroying the electrical lifelines that we all take for granted.

Goderich Mayor Deb Shewfelt and Larry McCabe, Clerk-Administrator,

quickly went into action, using their emergency plan to guide the town's recovery from the storm and assembling the community's emergency control group. Recovery efforts were hampered not only by the loss of electricity, but by extremely hot and humid weather, which lingered even after the storm had passed.

Once officials were reassured no residents were harmed, clearing the roads for emergency vehicle access and assessing the damage became the first order of business. Crews worked through what remained of the evening, but as daylight failed, operations were suspended around 10:00 p.m.

However, other work continued through the night. Neighbouring communities and private contractors were contacted to arrange assistance in the cleanup and restoration of electrical services. Police and fire

vehicles patrolled the streets for security. The local hospital and seniors residences were contacted to see if assistance was required. By the next morning the community emergency control group officially declared an emergency, and I travelled to Goderich on behalf of EMO to assist as an adviser and provide liaison with the province.

The public utilities commission took the lead in dealing with the emergency. Crews cleared trees and debris ahead of hydro crews. A priority was to restore electricity to the hospital as quickly as possible.

Meanwhile, the community needed to know what had happened, what was being done, where they could find out information and what the major health concerns were. Local media assisted in conveying information, but not everyone had a battery-operated radio or television.

An elected official volunteered to work with the local newspaper (which still had electricity) to produce a one-page flyer on the emergency. Via the flyer, citizens were advised:

- ☒ what foods were safe to keep and for how long,
- ☒ where spoiled food should be disposed,
- ☒ that a local supermarket had provided a refrigerated truck for citizens to save their freezer contents, and
- ☒ told the location of the only working bank machine in town.

The flyer also advertised a public lunch which had been organized



Despite the severity of the storm, most homes escaped serious damage.

(see *Goderich*, page 6)

Where There's Smoke There's Fire!

BY WAYNE BENNETT

For residents of Dubreuilville, August '95 will be remembered for a long time to come.

The small, forest industry town of about 1,100 people is located 30 kilometers north of Wawa. With two major forest fires threatening the community, town officials turned to their community emergency plan to help them handle this critical situation.

After consultation with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), town officials met on the morning of August 21 and decided to evacuate the community. Since the Reeve was out of town on business, his alternate was called upon to exercise his authority under the Emergency Plans Act and implement the town's emergency plan. At 9:55 that morning, a call was made to Emergency Measures Ontario in Toronto to formally declare an emergency. Town officials also contacted Wawa and White River; both communities agreed to receive evacuees from Dubreuilville, and began to make preparations.

The residents of the receiving communities and Dubreuilville clearly demonstrated the spirit of Northern hospitality. Families took in families and local merchants donated goods and services. Registration and enquiry systems, counselling services, meals, re-routing of mail, arranging emergency financial assistance, health/medical services, feeding/housing of pets, media/public information and staff/volun-



The only road out of Dubreuilville was jammed with evacuating residents.

teer scheduling all presented challenges. The flexibility and creativity of the control groups in each community (and some advice from EMO) made addressing these issues much easier.

While the kindness of individuals will not be forgotten, it takes planning and preparation to organize and deliver services to evacuees. Anyone involved in either an exercise or a real emergency knows the value of having an evacuation *and* a reception plan.

Back in Dubreuilville, a skeleton staff of essential municipal services remained. The fire department maintained a 24-hour fire watch on their town. Public works, ambulance and essential administrative staff remained, along with members of the council. Dubreuilville Forest Prod-

ucts Limited also left some staff to protect the mill and provide assistance to the town.

After a few days of sustained, aggressive attack on the fires by MNR, people began to wonder when they would be able to return home. Town officials were faced a number of new questions:

- ☒ When would it be safe for residents to go home?
- ☒ How would residents be informed that they could return?
- ☒ What if residents all came back at once?
- ☒ When could residents go back to work?

It was decided the town should prepare a re-entry plan to guide them

(Goderich continued from page 1)

where people could enjoy a meal in air-conditioned comfort.

Elected officials

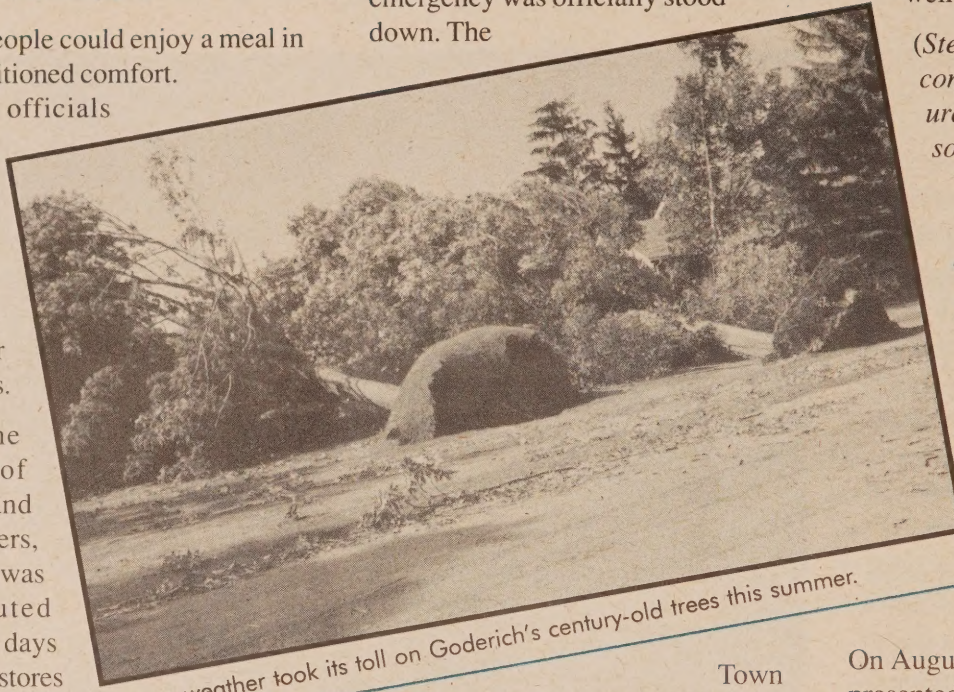
and senior staff would be at the lunch to answer questions.

With the help of police and firefighters, the flyer was distributed for three days to local stores and hand-delivered to residents.

When time permitted, Mayor Shewfelt and Larry McCabe walked the areas affected by the storm to see how the citizens were dealing with the event. The community really appreciated this personal contact.

On July 17, after most recovery

work had been completed, the emergency was officially stood down. The



Severe weather took its toll on Goderich's century-old trees this summer.

Town of Goderich managed this emergency extremely well because the community had an emergency plan and they all worked as a team. They also benefited from the designation of a lead agency early in the management of the emergency, and from using innovative methods like the flyer to maintain communications to the public throughout the incident.

Congratulations Goderich, on a job well done!

(Steve Beatty is EMO's community emergency measures adviser (CEMA) for southwestern Ontario.)

(Dubreuilville continued from page 5)

in bringing the residents home safely and returning the community to normal. This plan was developed with input from the OPP, MNR, EMO and the forest company.

On August 28, while the fires still presented a threat, they were being sufficiently managed by MNR to allow the safe return of residents. In the days that followed, emergency logs were reviewed and comments were solicited from all persons involved in the emergency (including residents) to determine what could be done to improve the emergency plan.

All the communities and agencies involved in this emergency were afforded valuable insights into what needs to be done to evacuate a community safely and, perhaps more importantly, how to look after residents while they are away from home. During most major emergencies, one community must usually rely on another for assistance. It makes good sense to work out mutual aid, evacuation and reception arrangements in advance so that available resources are accounted for and used appropriately.

(Wayne Bennett is EMO's community emergency measures adviser (CEMA) for northeastern Ontario.)



Dubreuilville's forest fires were doubly devastating since a large number of the town's residents are employed by the local forestry company.

Planning for the Year 2000

What is the ideal emergency response system for Canada in the year 2000 and beyond?

This is a question that emergency responders and industry have begun to seriously consider over the past several years, particularly in the area of transporting hazardous substances.

In 1993, the Canadian Chemical Producer's Association (CCPA) took the lead in trying to determine an answer, and initiated some preliminary discussions on the topic. It soon became apparent that a formal process was needed to guide the discussions.

The Major Industrial Accident Council of Canada (MIACC) was approached in late 1993 and agreed to sponsor the project. Given the title of *ER2000+* the project's mandate was:

"To define the ideal emergency management system for transportation and fixed site emergencies involving hazardous substances in Canada for the year 2000 and beyond, from organizational, social, political, technical and cost perspectives."

A steering committee was formed and, to date, has identified eight categories of the emergency response system and identified 68 related topics requiring further study and input from the field. But, to assess future emergency response procedures, more input is required.

During 1995 and 1996, a task force will oversee the collection of papers, statistics and other data. This information will be analyzed at regional and national workshops in

1996-97. A report identifying authorities responsible for the proposed system, along with recommendations on how to implement it, will conclude the project in 1998.

Discussion of the *ER2000+* project took place at the MIACC PPR '95 Conference in Toronto, October 31 to November 3, 1995. This session provided an opportunity to present and review the information gathered to date, further define the approach

taken by the project team and obtain additional input from the emergency response community.

Anyone interested in participating in the project as a member of the data gathering task force, as a writer or reviewer of position papers or in any other capacity, is encouraged to contact the chair of the *ER2000+* steering committee, Bill MacKay, at (416) 968-4767 or by faxing (416) 968-4780.

Project Upgrade

Revising the Provincial Nuclear Emergency Plan

Over the next three years, *Project Upgrade* is being undertaken by Emergency Measures Ontario to revise the Provincial Nuclear Emergency Plan (PNEP).

Several factors contributed to the decision to update the PNEP. First and foremost was the need to enhance the province's nuclear response capability and ensure an appropriate level of public safety.

The current Provincial Nuclear Emergency Plan was developed in the early 1980's. Following the Chernobyl accident in the former Soviet Union in 1986, a detailed review of the safety of Ontario Hydro's Candu reactors and their associated emergency plans was undertaken by the Ontario Nuclear Safety Review (Hare Commission) and the Provincial Working Group #8. Many of the recommendations made in these reports were accepted and needed to be incorporated in the PNEP. In addition, experience gained in the past few years dealing with a number of

incidents/accidents at nuclear generating stations, and during nuclear emergency exercises, have confirmed the need to carry out extensive revisions to many of the PNEP concepts, policies and procedures.

Key to the revision process is extensive consultation, consensus building and scientific input which will take place among a broad spectrum of stakeholders. As a first step, all agencies having an interest in the PNEP have been asked to indicate areas of concern they may have with the current plan. Most of the actual plan re-development work will involve staff from provincial ministries, municipalities and nuclear facility operators. The services of outside consultants will be contracted for specific parts of the project.

Work on *Project Upgrade* has been underway since September of this year and, barring any significant delays, the project will officially commence in early 1996.



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The Back Page

Upcoming EMO Training Courses

Emergency Planning and Response

Provides the basic knowledge required to prepare emergencies plans and respond to emergencies.

Nov. 28 - 30 Tillsonburg

Feb. 6 - 8 Moosonee

Feb. 27 - 29 Toronto

Mar. 12 - 14 Newmarket

Mar. 26 - 28 Rama*

* (Priority for this course will be given to First Nations participants.)

Exercise Design Course

Provides instruction on planning and conducting a community emergency exercise.

Nov. 15 - 17 Barrie

Emergency Public Information

Provides training for individuals designated to act as spokespersons during an actual emergency.

Dec. 5 - 7 Oakville

For more information: any of these courses, please contact EMO at (416) 314-3723 or by faxing (416) 314-3758.

JEPP Update

The latest Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) guidelines were mailed out in early September. JEPP funding will be available for the 1996/97 fiscal year. However, the program is still undergoing a major review by the federal government.

The federal share of this cost sharing program for most community projects is up to a maximum of 45 per cent. However, there are funding limits placed on all projects. Communities receive reimbursement after the project has been completed.

The deadline for submitting applications to Emergency Measures Ontario was November 1, 1995.

Projects involving the development and testing of community emergency plans are given priority. If money remains after those projects have been funded, applications for equipment, such as radio telecommunications, will be considered, but only if the community has an up-to-date emergency plan.

For more information on the JEPP program, please contact Maureen Griffiths, manager, community preparedness at (416) 314-8616, or the EMO area office nearest you:

Kingston:	(613) 545-4590
Sudbury:	(705) 675-4474
Thunder Bay:	(807) 473-3191
London:	(519) 679-7055

Emergency Measures Conference Held For Southeastern Ontario

September 12, 1995 marked the inaugural meeting for key emergency measures officials in southeastern Ontario. Randy Reid, EMO's community emergency measures adviser (CEMA) for the area, arranged the Kingston conference to facilitate an exchange of emergency measures information and ideas.

Emergency planners, committee chairs and other emergency measures officials discussed a wide range of issues including:

- ☒ the need for political support for emergency measures programs,
- ☒ emergency plans and how to achieve and maintain their viability,
- ☒ mutual assistance agreements,
- ☒ post-emergency recovery,

- ☒ county Community Awareness Emergency Response (CAER),
- ☒ emergency telecommunications emergency notifications, and
- ☒ evacuation/reception.

While all of these topics were each discussed in detail, the issue of the need for political support received a great deal of attention, as did the topic of standardizing emergency plans.

Participants shared a unique opportunity to meet with other emergency measures officials and share insights and experiences. It was agreed that the conference would be made an annual September event, to provide a forum for southeastern Ontario emergency measures officials working to improve the delivery of emergency measures services.